

Evolution of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade

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Evolution of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade

Michael B. West
Major, U. S. Marine Corps
School of Advanced Warfighting

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The Evolution of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade

Author: Major Michael B. West, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: As the mid-sized member of the Marine Corps MAGTF triad, the modern MEB (1980s) developed out of a requirement for a cohesive, rapid response, power projection force; it was an important force structure in the Corps' operational history.

Discussion: Over the past century, the Marine Corps has demonstrated flexibility in adapting to competing peacetime constraints and wartime requirements to maintain the nation's premier air-ground, amphibious force-in-readiness. These competing issues plus the powerful pull of tradition shaped the structure, permanence, and employment of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) over the years of its existence. From the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in Korea and the activation of the First Provisional MAGTF in Hawaii in 1953, MEB history owes much to the early air ground task force. In 1962, MCO 3120.3, *The Organization of Marine Air-Ground Task Forces*, formally defined the MEU, MEB, and MEF organizations as a flexible menu of responsive MAGTFs. Though no MEBs were created as permanent organizations at that time, task organized MEBs were to optimize the combat power of the force by combining its ground, air, and combat service support elements in a way that provided exponential enhancement of force capabilities as a whole. After Vietnam, the changing international threat environment required a new approach to power projection. Maritime and geographic prepositioning force assets developed as a crucial compromise for limited amphibious and strategic lift. To a large extent, the development of the Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS) concept in the early 1980s drove the Marine Corps to create permanent MEB headquarters. An associated 'composite MAGTF' concept was developed in the mid-1980s to provide greater stability and continuity and to permit more detailed planning and better preparation for rapid deployment. This activation of permanent MEB headquarters and the development of a composite MAGTF doctrine were advertised to be an operational response to the old problem of relying too much on hastily constituted, *ad hoc* command elements formed at a time of crisis. As the Cold War ended, wartime requirements, peacetime manpower constraints, and traditions all combined to impact the decision to deactivate the permanent MEB headquarters in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Conclusion: Regardless of the peacetime manning and budget constraints placed on the Corps over the years, the wartime requirements for cohesive, well trained MAGTF staffs and the ability to project combat power rapidly have remained constant. From its official inception, the MEB was designed to play a critical role in the force projection equation as the lead element for a MEF or as an independent amphibious or MPF force. At times, the MEB carried out this role very well. The extent to which the Corps has structured and trained to leverage this concept for stability and flexibility has varied. Recommendations for improvement, old and new, abound. Institutional change is difficult. In its attempt to adapt to changing environments, the Corps has sought the best force structure to balance peacetime constraints and wartime requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
List of Figures	iii
Introduction and Thesis	1
Evolution of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade	1
1962: MCO 3120.3	2
1970s: NATO Support Requirement	4
1976: Haynes Report: Force Structure Study	4
1980: Rapid Response and Power Projection	5
1982: New Administration and New MAGTF HQ Concept	6
1988: FMFM-1, Maneuver Warfare Doctrine	8
1989: MAGTF Master Plan (MMP)	9
Permanent MEB CE Deactivations	10
Wartime Requirements: Operation Desert Storm	10
Peacetime Constraints: Budget and Manning	11
Tradition: Primacy of MEF and Div/Wing Team	11
MEB Debates and Proposals	12
Critique of the Ad-hoc Staff	12
Brigade the Corps	13
Embedded MEB Staff	14
Fix the ACE	15
Summary	15
Notes	16
Figures	21
Appendices	26
Bibliography	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. USMC Brigades Timeline	21
2. Notional Amphibious MEB (circa 1990)	22
3. Maritime Prepositioning Force Data	23
4. Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Compositing Concept	24
5. Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Data (circa 1984)	25

Evolution of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade

"Faces change like men. Some cherished institutions and practices are inevitable casualties in the continua/ process of change that typifies any vigorous, self-renewing society."

BGen Henderson, MCG, Jul 1971

Over the past century, the Marine Corps has demonstrated flexibility in adapting to competing peacetime constraints and wartime requirements to maintain the nation's premier air-ground, amphibious force-in-readiness. These competing issues plus the powerful pull of tradition shaped the structure, permanence, and employment of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) over the years of its existence. *As the mid-sized member of the Marine Corps MAGTF triad¹, the modern MEB (1980s) developed out of a requirement for a cohesive, rapid response, power projection force; it was an important force structure in the Corps' operational history.*

Evolution of the MEB

The roots of the MEB trace back to the development of the air-ground task force in World War II. In the early 1950s, a changing international security environment, an evolving National Military Strategy, and new operational requirements all encouraged the further development of the air-ground team concept that led to the creation of a brigade sized MAGTF.²

Adapting to peacetime constraints, wartime requirements, and the call of tradition, Marine Corps brigades have varied in structure, permanence, and employment. With respect to ***structure***, Marine brigades have varied from a small, light, infantry force of less than 5,000 Marines to a large, air and mechanized heavy force of more than 16,000 Marines. When looking at ***permanence***, the concept of a brigade sized MAGTF has been constant, but permanent MEB units have been the exception rather than the rule. Provisional or temporary brigades have been continually created to fill operational gaps or short term requirements. Most brigade lineages reflect a cyclical history of "activate, de-activate, activate" (See Figure 1). Standing Brigade headquarters, or command

elements, have been practical compromises between permanent brigades and none at all. With respect to *employment*, MEBs have been employed across the full spectrum of conflict but were best suited to deal with conflict in the low to mid intensity range. They were used as primary choice for force projection and deployment options that evolved to include amphibious shipping, maritime and geographic prepositioning, and strategic airlift.

From the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in Korea³ and the activation of the First Provisional MAGTF in Hawaii in 1953⁴, MEB history owes much to the early air ground task force.⁵ This paper, though, will *focus on the key events and transitions of the modern MEB, 1982 - 1992*.

Between 1956 and 1962, institutional guidance to improve air-ground organizations was "issued primarily by G-3 letter type directives"⁶ until a Marine Corps Order (MCO)⁷ was drafted, that provided the first formal definition of the three tiers of MAGTF that are still used today.

1962: MCO 3120.3

MCO 3120.3, "The Organization of Marine Air-Ground Task Forces,"⁸ formally defined the MEU, MEB, and MEF organizations as a flexible menu of responsive MAGTFs.⁹ None were created as permanent organizations at that time. The MCO stated that,

A Marine air-ground task force is a task organization that is designed to exploit the combat power inherent in carefully integrated air and ground operations.... The MEB is normally commanded by a brigadier general. It is capable of conducting sustained air-ground combat operations. However, the majority of situations in which sustained combat is anticipated will eventually require a larger Marine air-ground task force. Accordingly, the MEB is normally organized to accomplish a **limited mission**. Upon accomplishment of the mission, a Marine Expeditionary Force or Marine Expeditionary Corp usually absorbs the MEB.¹⁰

As early as 1962, then, one sees the concept of "absorption" and the assignment of limited missions to a MEB. The execution of a larger MAGTF absorbing a smaller one was seen in Vietnam, in operations throughout the 1980s, and most recently in Desert Shield.

Also included in the early doctrine was the idea that a MEB may be included as

a separate element in the MEF task organization to conduct independent air-ground operations separated sufficiently in space or time from other MEF elements to preclude MEF command and control. Such operations are normally of limited duration.¹¹

A MEB was to be created to optimize the combat power of the force by combining its ground, air, and combat service support elements in a way that provided exponential enhancement of force capabilities as a whole.¹² The combat power of the combined arms task force was proven to be much greater than the simple sum of its component elements. As reflected in the notional 1990 MEB in Figure 2, the Air Combat Element (ACE) of the MEB was created by compositing the fixed and rotary wing squadrons, and air defense assets, from several different air stations under a single group commander. The Ground Combat Element (GCE) of the MEB was built around a Regimental Landing Team, and the Combat Service Support Element (CSSE) was a task organized Brigade Service Support Group capable of supporting the MEB for 30 days.

Throughout the 1960's, the Marine Corps deployed various sized MAGTFs in response to national crises. The Dominican Intervention of 1965 saw the initial employment of the 6th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which led to the eventual buildup of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade. In Vietnam, the first substantial commitment of U.S. ground combat forces was on 8 March 1965, when the 9th MEB landed at Da Nang. By the end of March, nearly 5,000 Marines were at Da Nang in two infantry battalions, two helicopter squadrons, and associated support units.¹³ On 7 May, the 3d MEB landed at Chu Lai, some 55 miles south of Da Nang. Both MEBs were then absorbed into the *ad hoc* III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), which pulled Marines from everywhere. Eventually, the III Marine *Amphibious* Force (MAF), as it became known after a controversial term change¹⁴, would include two Marine Divisions, two Marine regimental combat teams, and a super wing under the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.¹⁵ Lessons in these early MAGTF operations highlighted the benefits of having various sized MAGTFs to deploy sequentially and build up as needed.

1970s: NATO Support Requirement

During the 1970s, the U.S. National Defense Strategy gradually changed from a two major theater war strategy to a one-war strategy. As a result of a narrower DoD threat focus and accompanying force reduction, the Marine Corps struggled to justify its end strength. It perceived the need to be "a bigger player" in NATO. Lieutenant General Robert H. Barrow, Commanding General (CG) FMFLant, was a key leader in promoting the *Marine Amphibious Brigade as the lead element of a Marine Amphibious Force* that could rapidly respond to NATO scenarios. With the focus on Europe and a potential Russian threat, a "swing concept" was envisioned whereby an East Coast brigade (4th MAB) of approximately 15,000 would deploy as the lead MAGTF of II MAF. A second force was to subsequently deploy with West Coast amphibious "swing" shipping assets and deploy to Europe as a follow on force. General Alfred M. Gray, as CG of 4th MAB, was encouraged to promote the utility of the MAB to a European audience; not as a typical Army brigade, but as a full MAGTF with organic aviation and combat service support. With potential missions on the edges of NATO, the Corps was interested in advertising the very real capabilities of the MAB to NATO and to a congressional audience in the midst of the continual roles and missions debate.¹⁶

1976: Haynes Report -- Force Structure Study

After completing a study of the Marine Corps' mission and peacetime force structure for the mid-range period¹⁷ in March 1976, a special study group under Major General Fred Haynes, USMC, provided three alternative peacetime force structures for the Commandant's review. In accordance with a perceived change in the international security arena from low intensity conflict toward mid-to-high intensity warfare, each alternative reflected this shift while retaining "the capability for employment in the broadest range of scenarios."¹⁸ This meant that the MAF rather than the smaller MAB received the most focus. After evaluation of force structure issues using both qualitative and

quantitative techniques¹⁹, the alternatives "re-emphasized the importance of the combined arms team, but simultaneously required a modification of the roles of some of its key components such as infantry and tactical aircraft."²⁰ The selected alternative included "two MAF's capable of defensive and limited offensive operations in the mid-to-high intensity battlefield."²¹ The board decided that no additional permanent MAGTFs were to be created.²² During the remainder of the 70s and 80s, MABs were temporarily employed throughout the world in exercises and small-scale operations.²³

1980: Rapid Response and Power Projection (MEB Deployment)

From the birth of the Corps, Marine deployments have been linked to Naval Expeditionary Forces as amphibious ships provided the earliest means for Marines to deploy overseas. In the continual budget competition associated with the roles and missions debate, amphibious shipping availability has been a critical consideration in the structuring of MEBs to balance combat power projection with strategic mobility²⁴. Maritime and geographic prepositioning force assets developed as a crucial compromise for limited amphibious and strategic lift.²⁵ *To a large extent, the development of the Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS) concept in the early 1980s drove the Marine Corps to create permanent MEB headquarters.*²⁶

The maritime prepositioning concept developed out of the recognition in the late 1970's that the U.S. military had a limited ability to rapidly project sufficient heavy forces of brigade size to the Middle East.²⁷ As part of the solution, a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) concept started to take shape²⁸, but the problem of moving sufficient heavy equipment remained. In early 1980, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown testified to the Congress, "Although we can lift a brigade size force by air to the scene of a minor contingency very quickly, that force would be relatively light...." To supply such a force by air with substantial mechanized or armored support, along with necessary ammunition, he went on to testify, would occupy almost all of DoD's airlift

force.²⁹ The fundamental question was how DoD could improve its strategic mobility. The Near Term Prepositioning Force (NTPF) concept was the initial answer.³⁰ Under General Robert H. Barrow, the 7th MAB was designated as the primary unit for the RDJTF.³¹ In December 1981, 7th MAB major subordinate command staffs were established to better prepare for their mission of providing a quick-reaction force under the NTPF program.³²

Developed almost simultaneously with the NTPF, a land based prepositioning concept called the Norway Air-Landed Marine Amphibious Brigade (NALMAB) eventually evolved. By 1981, the U.S. (DoD) had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Norway to provide an amphibious brigade for prompt reinforcement of Norway. With General Paul X. Kelley's support, the concept of a MAB flying into Norway to marry up with prepositioned equipment led to a very productive annual exercise. Eventually, a land based prepositioning site was developed in Trondheim, Norway to better support the rapid deployment of the Marine brigade.³³ As the land-based NALMAB concept took shape, DoD's focus returned to maritime prepositioning.

As Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Kelley championed the Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS) concept as a viable follow on to NTPF and a solution to the strategic mobility challenge.³⁴ The MPS concept evolved throughout the mid-1980s to include three squadrons of contracted ships; each designed to carry the combat equipment for a MEB (See Figure 3). This new strategic mobility solution brought with it many new and expensive support requirements. The Corps recognized the need for dedicated staffs to focus on the many operational and logistic complexities inherent in an MPS operation.

1982: New Administration and New MAGTF HQ Concept

With the Reagan administration in 1982 came a new opportunity to recover valuable manpower structure. Specifically, the Corps acquired the money and manning needed to create new

headquarters to focus on the evolving MPS concept. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the 4th MAB had been the only real "operational" brigade HQ nucleus with approximately 35 permanent staff.³⁵ With three brigades worth of equipment prepositioned around the world on three MPS squadrons, the shortfall of brigade planning headquarters was soon to be rectified.

The composite MAGTF concept that developed in the early 1980s was discussed and accepted, in principle,³⁶ at the General Officer Symposium of 1982. Under that new concept, three *MAF planning headquarters* and six permanent *MAB command elements* were to be established from 1983 to 1990 on a phased basis "to provide greater stability and continuity and [to] permit more detailed planning and better preparation for deployment."³⁷ As reflected in Figure 4 from 1985, the MAF headquarters was intended to be a nucleus staff that would absorb, as needed, a full MAB command element to form an operational MAF.³⁸ These manning decisions reflected a focus on the MAB as the most likely operational headquarters. A key aspect of this new concept was that three MAB headquarters were designated for *amphibious missions* and three for *maritime pre-positioning missions*.³⁹ Specific designation as either an amphibious or MPS headquarters encouraged more focused planning, dedicated training and operational expertise.⁴⁰ This also more accurately reflected the force projection capabilities available to the NCA.⁴¹ In addition to solving the MPS planning problem, the permanent MAB headquarters concept would help solve the long debated problems associated with *ad hoc* headquarters.

According to the DC/S for Plans Policy and Operations in 1983, "All too frequently we jury-rig our command structure for an exercise, then disband it at the conclusion of the event, losing the benefit of continuity. To create an *ad hoc* MAGTF headquarters at any level, if combat is imminent, is sloppy at best and disastrous at worst. After long study and analysis, it was determined that the new permanent MAGTF headquarters provides the best combination for **stability and flexibility**."⁴²

Some MAF, MAB, and MAU staffs existed at this time, but not as part of a cohesive system. The two MAB staffs per MAF were to be staffed and located as listed in Figure 5. Throughout 1983, this concept was debated and refined.⁴³ More difficult than the peacetime constraint of manpower sourcing was the doctrinal question of how Marines would fight once ashore.

The permanent MAGTF headquarters concept was designed so that an effective wartime MAF headquarters would result if a nucleus MAF CE were phased into an operational area and combined with a MAB headquarters already on scene. At issue was how much the command should try to organize in the face of the enemy and whether division, wing, and combat service support elements were needed, or even desirable, during the early phase.⁴⁴

In 1985, two years after the permanent MAGTF concept was approved, General Kelley made the final decisions, amidst continuing concerns, to bring the plan into effect over the following years.⁴⁵ Out of an end strength of 198,025 Marines, the Corps was to have 13 permanently established MAGTF headquarters, 3 MAFs, 6 MABs, and 4 MAUs. This initiative was advertised to be in direct response to the old problem of relying too much on hastily constituted, temporary command elements formed at a time of crisis.⁴⁶ According to MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC(Ret), "A desire to maintain the highest readiness and to provide a well-trained team to lead our Marines at the point of the spear dictated the choice [for establishing permanent MAB HQs]."⁴⁷

An Advanced Amphibious Study Group was tasked with developing and communicating the doctrinal aspects of this new concept. Their July 1985 report described a new MAGTF building block approach that the Marine Corps would adopt to ensure a rapid and sequential flow of combat ready forces into a theater of operations.⁴⁸ The new composite MAGTF concept, whereby larger MAGTFs could be formed by combining two or more smaller MAGTFs, was a radical change from previous thinking about forming MAGTFs⁴⁹ and was not received without debate in the Corps.

1988: FMFM-1, Maneuver Warfare Doctrine

Force structure was not the only thing changing in the Corps in the 1980s.⁵⁰ Doctrine, too, received a new focus.⁵¹ The new maneuver warfare doctrine adopted in the late 1980s placed a premium on tight, cohesive teamwork.

This warfighting doctrine maintains that decentralized command is necessary to cope with the uncertainty, disorder, and fluidity of combat and to develop the tempo of operations that we desire. The ability for seniors and subordinates to communicate through mutual understanding and anticipating each other's thoughts is essential for success under this doctrine. This *implicit communication* is based on a shared philosophy and experience which *can only be developed through the familiarity and trust that arises from established, long-term working relationships (emphasis added)*.⁵²

The permanent MAGTF command elements created in 1985 at the MEU, MEB, and MEF⁵³ levels were structured well to support this emerging doctrine.⁵⁴ Specifically, the rapid response, power projection scenarios that were anticipated for MPF and amphibious MEBs would greatly benefit from the familiarity and trust that would arise from established, long-term working relationships. This strength would change with the deactivation of the MEB headquarters in 1992.

1989: MAGTF Master Plan (MMP)

The 1989 MMP started to move the Corps' focus back to the low end of the conflict spectrum. In the MMP prologue, General Gray said, "In the approaching years of defense budget austerity, ...MAGTFs will become the nation's 'force of choice' in the most likely future conflicts, the lower end of the so-called spectrum of conflict. In so focusing its efforts, however, MAGTFs will retain initial usefulness in general war with three active MEFs."⁵⁵ In this MMP concept, some of the permanent MEB headquarters created in the mid-1980s were to continue playing a major role in responding to the exercise and contingency requirements⁵⁶ of the coming decade.⁵⁷

Permanent MEB CE Deactivations

The deactivation of some of the standing MEB headquarters (HQ) actually began during the 1988-1989 Force Structure Planning Group (FSPG), under General Gray, as a manpower savings decision.⁵⁸ The FSPG that met during 1991 was charged with "defining the most effective and capable structure for the Corps at the current DoD programmed manning level of 159,000 active force Marines."⁵⁹ Wartime requirements, peacetime manpower constraints, and traditions all played a role in the decision to deactivate the remaining permanent MEB HQ.⁶⁰

The *wartime requirement* factors that came into play in the FSPG deliberations resulted from the Corps' recent Operation Desert Shield / Storm experience. This experience provided the only real operational setting that had tested the modern MEB in the context of both the 'composite MAGTF' and MPS concepts.⁶¹ Key factors examined were MAGTF command and control (C2) requirements, force size and capabilities, and the composite MAGTF concept.

The experience of the Gulf War validated previous warnings⁶² that the technical and manpower requirements for C2 of a composite MAGTF in a joint environment would not be satisfactorily met by the current MEB (or, in some cases, even the MEF) configuration without additional augmentation.⁶³ Specifically, problems were identified in the MEB's ability to handle the full responsibilities associated with C2 of operational level aviation.⁶⁴ From the number of required liaison officers, to the C2 systems and the technicians required to set up, operate, and fix those systems, the MEB structure was inadequate for that level of conflict.⁶⁵

The underlying premise of the FSPG effort was that the MEF was the principal warfighting organization of the Marine Corps.⁶⁶ The FSPG saw that a MEF (and much less a MEB, as structured in Desert Storm) did not have the sheer size and combat power to carry out the critical and visible role as a component headquarters of a JTF while also acting as a warfighting HQ.⁶⁷

Even though the 7th and 1st MEB rapidly deployed to the Gulf region as planned and advertised⁶⁸, their identity as independent MAGTFs *was not conducive to the subsequent compositing* into the MEF in this instance. Though the MEB absorption was part of the clearly articulated compositing concept of 1985 (and had been exercised successfully before by others⁶⁹), traditional division/wing structure, personalities, and politics all played roles in the friction that existed during the absorption and transition to I MEF command.

Peacetime constraints that impacted the FSPG analysis were the external ceilings placed on Marine Corps budget and manning levels as their fair share of the overall post cold war DoD drawdown. The permanent MEB CE deactivations were a part of the Corps' force restructuring plan to reduce the number of manned headquarters staffs by 1997. The FSPG determined that in an organization of 159,100 men the Corps could "no longer afford the luxury of layering command elements and 'compositing' for combat."⁷⁰ *This was the most highly publicized reason for the permanent brigade headquarters deactivations.*

The element of service ***tradition*** that came into play during the MEB deactivation deliberations revolved around institutional survival and adaptation. As the brigade lineages in Appendix 1 reflect, the Corps' history is full of brigade activations and deactivations. The FSPG decision to deactivate the MEB CEs was not as difficult as a decision to request a change to Public Law (NSA 1947) and deactivate the traditional Marine Division headquarters (in favor of a new MEF / MEB structure) would have been. With large service cuts looming in the near future, the Marine Corps needed to structure realistically for the future and "market" the best force-in-readiness to DoD and the Congress.⁷¹ If the Corps were seen to be primarily a service based on brigades, vertical cuts or elimination of brigades might appear more attractive to senior decision-makers.

Based on the experience of Operation Desert Storm and the results of the 1991 FSPG, the 1992 MAGTF Master Plan (MMP) focused on the primacy of the MEF as a warfighter at the expense of the MEB. Though the full spectrum of contingencies was planned for in this MMP, the Corps' focus shifted away from the future use of MEBs as a distinct MAGTF entity. Instead, the MEF(Forward) would now be the lead echelon of the MEF.⁷² This decision involved several force structure reengineering challenges. The need for a MEB did not go away simply because the command elements were eliminated. Complex amphibious and MPF operations still demanded focused planning, dedicated training, and operational expertise.

MEB Debates and Proposals

Looking back over the evolution of the MEB, one sees a cycle of change in structure, permanence, and employment. Abundant, professional debate about all of these factors has been an important part of the MEB's evolution. The most relevant historical debates and proposals concerning the MEB have focused on the "structure and permanence" issues of task organizing for combat in peacetime vice waiting for war.

Critique of the Ad-hoc Staff

By design, the Marine Corps MAGTF concept provided great flexibility in force tailoring to meet specific mission requirements. This flexibility often came at the great cost of cohesion and habitual command relationships. The "ad-hocery" necessary to create a MAGTF headquarters and task organize its elements often precluded any hope of leveraging the strength of a previously well-oiled machine. Yet, it was in these subordinate command elements that the decentralized command crucial to maneuver warfare needed to be exercised. In this review of the MEB, the most commonly found debate centered around the perception that, institutionally, the Marine Corps consistently violated the principle of "training in peace like you will fight in war" by using *ad hoc* MAGTF

headquarters for operational deployments. Echoing a logical concern that continues to this day, Major Barlow, USMC, made a compelling argument to stop "robbing Peter to pay Paul" with *ad hoc* MAGTF staffs in his 1964 Gazette article, "Staff the Fire Brigade NOW". At this early point in MAGTF history, one already sees recommendations to maintain full time MEU and MEB staffs for critical continuity and cohesion.⁷³ There is ample evidence that waiting to build a team only when conflict requires one is not the best way to move into a fight.

As an example of this evidence, lessons from the 1980 Advanced Antiarmor Vehicle Evaluation (ARMVAL) highlighted the critical need for cohesion in a MAGTF like the MEB. Respected combat leader Colonel Robert H. Thompson, USMC, directed the six month ARMVAL and came to these conclusions, "The first step in achieving a capability to fight combined arms is to structure combined arms organizations. Task organized units will not be able to win on the complex modern battlefield. The difference is teamwork and cohesion. Understanding and belief in the system can only be achieved through months of living and training together."⁷⁴ This type of assessment has consistently highlighted the benefits of permanent MAGTF command elements.

Brigade the Corps

Various proposals for permanent brigade headquarters, or full brigades with assigned forces, have existed in various forms since the 1960s. In trying to alleviate the consequences of *ad-hoc* MAGTFs, numerous proposals questioned the traditional stand to maintain the division/wing structure.⁷⁵ In many debates over tradition vs. requirements, several authors essentially asked, "How important are the sacred cows?"

One proposal that challenged tradition was Major Joseph Schmid's 1989 Marine Corps Command and Staff paper titled "Reorganizing the Fleet Marine Force: From Division-Wing Teams to Marine Expeditionary Brigades". In this paper, Major Schmid examined all elements of the

division, wing, and MEB for impact across a wide range of factors. In short summary, his proposal sought to produce cohesion and operational readiness by eliminating 29 headquarters from within each MEF to create two active duty MEBs and one reserve MEB each in I and II MEF and two active MEBs in III MEF. Referring to the permanent MAGTF HQ concept of 1985, his proposal assigned each active MEB either an amphibious or MPS mission.

Major Frank G. Hoffman, USMCR presented a similar proposal, in a 1993 article that advocated restructuring into six MEBs, "a size and capability most consistent with the enabling concept" that the Commandant had adopted to characterize the Corps' role in the national defense.⁷⁶

Many have questioned the logic of why we have developed and "institutionalized an approach whereby regiments and aircraft groups have become largely administrative or 'type' commands, that provide battalions and squadrons to MEU or UDP deployments, while MAGTF command experience is concentrated in relatively few, small units outside the peacetime chain of command."⁷⁷ Command and control, span of control, manning, MOS and career progression, training, cohesion, and many more crucial issues have all been examined. These factors have routinely been addressed by organizations like the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) in an attempt to reduce unnecessary headquarters, meet budget and manning constraints, and provide a force structure that will allow the Corps to meet its peacetime UDP, MEU, and ACF requirements.⁷⁸ The challenge is to meet these peacetime requirements while developing cohesive, combat capable MAGTF units.

Embedded MEB Staff

After the Marine Corps' post-Desert Storm restructuring, Colonel Will Brown, USMCR, provided a proposal for making an embedded MEB staff work within the new downsizing constraints. "A new staff starts out as less than the sum of its parts and grows into something better only with time and training. **First**, identify the MEB command element staff within the MEF.

Second, call it what it is: a MEB, not a MEF(Forward), although it may have that mission. **Third**, train it as a staff"⁷⁹ As Colonel Brown pointed out in 1993, identification of a MEB staff on a MEF roster is one thing, but training it as a living MEB, with its own identity, is entirely different.

Fix the ACE

As a critical sub-problem of the larger MEB structuring issue, there has been a long-standing problem in forming the ACE for the MEB.⁸⁰ Because of the differences between the garrison and wartime organization of Marine Corps aviation units, the formation of the composite fixed-wing and rotary-wing MAGs of a MEB is arguably a painfully complex process. "The current organization of Marine Corps aviation units does not facilitate the rapid transition of Marine aviation units from their peacetime basing to their anticipated structure during a low to mid-level conflict."⁸¹ According to several aviators, a long-term solution to this complex problem would be to reorganize squadrons to create 12 active duty MAGs to support up to six MEBs — i.e. six MEB ACEs, each with a fixed and rotary-wing MAG.⁸²

Summary

Regardless of the peacetime manning and budget constraints placed on the Corps over the years, the *wartime requirements for cohesive, well trained MAGTF staffs and the ability to project combat power rapidly have remained constant*. From its official inception, the MEB was designed to play a critical role in the force projection equation as the lead element for a MEF or as an independent amphibious or MPF force. At times, the MEB carried out this role very well. The extent to which the Corps has structured and trained to leverage this concept for *stability and flexibility* has varied. Recommendations for improvement, old and new, abound. Institutional change is difficult. In its attempt to adapt to changing environments, the Corps has sought the best force structure to balance peacetime constraints and wartime requirements.

¹ USMC MAGTF Triad Approximate Personnel Strengths: **MEU**: 2,000 **MEB**: 14 -17,000 **MEF**: 30-50,000

² History and Museums Division, "The Marine Corps Air-Ground Team Concept," Point Paper, HQMC, 31 Jul 1979, p 3. After the National Security Act of 1947 provided formal recognition to the Marine Corps air-ground team, the Corps worked to re-establish the FMF as a force-in-readiness in the midst of demobilization and postwar reorganization. Summarizing these developments in a mid-1950 study, the Marine Corps Board maintained that the Corps was the nation's only integrated air-ground combat team and that Marine aviation was organized and trained for the purpose of furnishing the air element of this air-ground team. The troop carrying and utility helicopters that were developed during this era served to make ground units more dependent on a closely-knit air-ground team.

³ Moskin, Robert J., "The U.S. Marine Corps Story", 3d Edition, p 447. In the initial stages of the Korean War, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade provided one of the first instances where an "integrated air-ground team was going into combat under a single commander." In the first volume of the official Marine Corps history of the Korean War, *The Pusan Perimeter*, Colonel P.L. Freeman, USA, commanding the 23rd Infantry Regiment commented, "...the Marines on our left were a sight to behold. Not only was their equipment superior or equal to ours, but they had squadrons of air in direct support. They used it like artillery. It was, 'Hey, Joe — This is Smitty — Knock the left of that ridge in front of Item Company.' They had it day and night. It came off nearby carriers, and not from Japan with only 15 minutes of fuel to accomplish the mission."

⁴ CMC Annual Report to the Secretary of the Navy, August 1955. Further development of the helicopter and formal articulation from General Lemuel C. Shepherd in his annual report of 1955 continued to solidify the Marine Corps' air-ground concept that had been implicit in Marine Corps doctrine for more than 30 years. General Shepherd spoke of each FMF as "a flexible, mobile, integrated force of ground and air elements comprising a single weapons system." The following year, the 1st Provisional Air-Ground Task Force became the 1st Marine Brigade but retained its distinguishing air-ground character. In 1956, General Randolph M. Pate outlined a plan to ensure cumulative improvement in the concept of the Air-Ground Team in his report to the SecNav.

⁵ History and Museums Division, "The Marine Corps Air-Ground Team Concept," Point Paper, HQMC, 31 Jul 1979. Commenting on the 1951 Harris Board, which was tasked with assessing the Marine Corps' operational readiness and future, the operations branch of HQMC believed that "the formation of a **composite staff of air and ground officers for air-ground task organizations** for training and/or combat is considered desirable, but it presents many problems and ramifications which are not discussed or resolved in this report."

⁶ History and Museums Division, "The Marine Corps Air-Ground Team Concept," HQMC, 31 Jul 1979, p 4.

⁷ MCO 3120.3 of 27 Dec 1962.

⁸ MCO 3120.3 of 27 Dec 1962.

⁹ Interestingly, before the MEB concept was formalized by MCO in 1963, studies like Maj Galbraith's **1960** Junior School paper, "Should the Marine Expeditionary Brigade Staff be Permanently Organized?" already existed. It did not take long for the rest of the Corps to note that close coordination and staff continuity between the ground, air, and support elements of the MAGTF was a weak spot in the air-ground team concept.

¹⁰ MCO 3120.3 of 27 Dec 1962. (emphasis not original)

¹¹ MCO 3120.3 of 27 Dec 1962.

¹² Marine Air-Ground Task Force Presentation Team Pocket Guide, 1 October, 1990. "MAGTF operational composition was designed to be determined by the Naval Fleet and Fleet Marine Force Commanders based on specific mission, personnel, and deployment requirements."

¹³ Shulimson, Jack and Maj Edward F. Wells, "First In, First Out", MCG Jan 1984, p 36-37.

¹⁴ ALMAR 23/88 of 3 Feb 1988. Prior to WWII, and for a time thereafter, Marine units dispatched for overseas service were generally designated as expeditionary brigades. During WWII, the term amphibious was adopted because it depicted the Marine Corps' missions in the Pacific Theater. After the war, the previous expeditionary designation was restored only to be dropped again in 1965 as Marine Corps units were committed to combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam. It was felt that the term "expeditionary" carried the negative connotations of the previous colonial French Expeditionary Corps and therefore unpopular with the Vietnamese. From Vietnam until 1988, Marine task units carried the amphibious designation. Effective 5 February, 1988, Marine Air-Ground Task Force designations changed from MAU, MAB, and MAF back to the historical (pre-Vietnam) MEU, MEB, and MEF terminology. This change was made to more accurately reflect the Marine Corps missions and capabilities of the time, and it was a change back to the historical precedent.

¹⁵ Simmons, Edwin H., BGen, USMC(Ret), "Getting Marines to the Gulf", U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1991, p8.

¹⁶ Telephone Interview with Lieutenant General Robert F. Milligan, 15 October, 1999.

¹⁷ The Force Structure Study Group was directed to develop alternative force structures, concept of employment, disposition and deployment of Marine Corps forces through 1985. The study group examined mission and force structure in terms of national strategy, the threat, and advances in weapons system technology.

¹⁸ Haynes, Fred, Maj Gen, USMC, "*Marine Corps Mission and Force Structure Study*", Memorandum for the Commandant HQMC, Washington, D.C., 29 Mar 1976.

¹⁹ Computer simulations from the MAGTF Lift Model were used to develop the data for the strategic movement and amphibious lift analysis.

²⁰ Haynes Report, 29 March 1976, p i.

²¹ Haynes Report, 29 March 1976, p iii. The two non-selected alternatives proposed formation of *Mobile Assault Regiments*. One of the major issues that was discussed was whether the Marine Corps should retain the current Division/Wing organization. The consensus was to retain. The *main reason for retaining* was that "the Division/Wing is a functional organization recognized by law (NSA 1947) from which our task organizations are readily formed." In fact, one of the group's assumptions going into the study was that "the statutory requirement for three active divisions and wings would be retained."

²² Fegan, J.C., LtGen, USMC, "Marine Corps Mission and Force Structure Study", Memorandum for the Commandant, MCDEC, Quantico, VA, 15 Jun 1976, p3.

²³ History and Museums Division, HDH memo Sep 1978. As an example of a rapidly task organized MAGTF, the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade was activated for planning contingency operations on 26 March 1975. "Under the leadership of Brigadier General Richard E. Carey, the MAB prepared for and then successfully executed Operation Frequent Wind, the largest helicopter evacuation ever attempted. Lifting U.S. citizens and Vietnamese refugees from Saigon resulted in the safe evacuation of nearly 7,000 people. With the conclusion of Frequent Wind, the 9th MAB deactivated on 11 May 1975 but maintained a nucleus staff over the next several months."

²⁴ Scharfen, J.C., Col, USMC(Ret), "*Views From PP&O: An Interview with LtGen Trainor*", Marine Corps Gazette, Sep 1983, p 38. "Amphibious ships are both expensive and limited. At present, roughly a brigade's worth of amphibious lift is available in the Atlantic and Pacific.... Such a program is underway to give us the capability to lift simultaneously the assault echelons of a MAF and MAB. Complementary to this is the Maritime pre-positioning Ship (MPS) Program, which also serves to supplement the forward deployed fleet posture in potential hot spots." The current three ship ARG can support 2.1 MEBs. Only when the last of the LPD-17 class ships reaches the fleet in 2008, however, will the Navy fulfill its goal of supporting 2.5 MEBs.

²⁵ With the development of mass transportation aircraft, light brigades had a new way to get to the fight, but strategic airlift availability was, as always, a peacetime constraint on the structure and deployment of Marine brigades. Whether it was the ongoing Air Contingency Force requirement or a small-scale contingency, the challenge was to create a force structure light enough to get there, but heavy enough to stay and fight.

²⁶ Telephone Interview with Lieutenant General Robert F. Milligan, 15 October, 1999.

²⁷ Burchell, Bernard, Major, USMC, "Maritime Prepositioning Force: A Historical Analysis", MMS, Command & Staff College, Marine Corps University, May 1993, p 9. "The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War caused the Marine Corps to question the survivability of its amphibious forces in a new high tech battlefield using modern weaponry. This war also ended an era which identified the Marine Corps' primary opponent as only lightly armed Third World countries... Given the geography of the Southwest Asian region and potential adversaries there, a heavier mechanized force would be needed. This change enhanced the requirement for a power projection capability."

²⁸ Burchell, p 10. "Between February 1977 and February 1979, the Carter administration had determined that a requirement existed for an improved non-NATO military capability. This decision marked the beginning of both the MPF program and the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), a totally distinct program." Between March and August 1979, the RDF program continued to grow and was subsequently renamed the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). The RDJTF was the fore-runner of the current U.S. Central Command.

²⁹ Simmons, p 8.

³⁰ Burchell, p 11. "The Secretary of the Navy directed that the Navy Department initiate a program of enhanced mobility for the Marine Corps forces. Although not specifically titled as such, this decision marked the beginning of MPF.... The success of initial tests and the advent of hostilities in Iran and Afghanistan in 1979 resulted in the birth of the Near Term Prepositioned Ships (NTPS). Deployed in 1980, NTPS initially involved six commercial (black bottom) ships loaded with sufficient equipment to sustain a 11,200 Marine Corps brigade for 15 days." Though the NTPS represented a multi-billion dollar program, it was a tough sell in the Marine Corps, even with the Commandant. Landing Marines in a benign environment to marry up with combat equipment was not perceived to be a realistic

deployment option. In 1983, NTPS and its follow on, the Enhanced NTPS, merged and became known as the Near Term Prepositioning Force (NTPF).

³¹ General P.X. Kelley was designated as the first Commanding General of the RDJTF, much to the chagrin of the Army.

³² HQMC(PA) News Release, "7th MAB Subordinate Element Headquarters Activation", Washington, D.C., 17 Dec 1981.

³³ Marine involvement in Norway began under the NATO reinforcement program during the late 1970s. Prior to the development of the prepositioned site, the Marine Corps deployed with the vast majority of combat equipment it needed and borrowed the remainder in country during reinforcement exercises.

³⁴ Burchell, p12. MPF operations proved to be a wise investment of scarce mobility assets. "Validated under real-world pressure, MPF operations provided the first truly capable force in northern Saudi Arabia in September 1990. The goal to unload ships and marry equipment with arriving units was achieved within the expected 10 days. In fact, the first brigade (7th MEB) occupied its defensive positions within four days of its arrival."

³⁵ Though it had existed since 1953, the 1st MEB in Hawaii was not really an operational Brigade. It rarely trained as a full Brigade and did not have any dedicated amphibious shipping.

³⁶ Marine Corps Gazette, "New MAGTF HQ Concept", Sep 1982, p 4.

³⁷ Marine Corps Gazette, Sep 1982, p 4.

³⁸ An e-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC(Ret), further highlighted the deployment role of the MEB. "The driving factor in standing up MEB headquarters was the recognition that a MEF would be required to conduct **sustained** combat operations, but our amphibious and MPF lift capability dictated that the initial units would deploy as MEBs. The MEF would be reconstituted in the theater. MEBs would not only deploy, but must be prepared to engage in combat operations until the remainder of the MEF arrived."

³⁹ Linn, T.C., Maj, USMC, "*The Composite MAGTF Concept*", Marine Corps Gazette, Aug 1984, p 22-24. Recognizing that the MPS program was not a substitute for the forcible entry capability provided by an amphibious force, an MPS force was designed to complement the forcible entry capability. Each respective MAB, under this concept, would deploy by their designated mode, and when necessary the amphibious MAB would conduct a forcible entry with the MPS MAB reinforcing.

⁴⁰ For example, the MPF Brigades needed to train in the armor and mechanized environment of 29 Palms, CA more often than the amphibious brigades. Though the 1st MAB was designated as an MPF MAB, but it had no capability to train with mechanized assets. These points were highlighted by Dr Jack Matthews, LtCol, USMC(Ret).

⁴¹ HQMC, "*The Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Concept and How it Applies in the Formation of a Composite MAGTF: Second Edition*", Advanced Amphibious Study Group, Washington, D.C., 15 Jul 1985..

⁴² Trainor, B.E., LtGen, USMC, "Views from PP&O", Marine Corps Gazette, Sep 1983, p 39.

⁴³ An e-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC(Ret), amplified the manpower and *ad hoc* staff considerations, "We could not afford the structure to man MEB and MEF HQs. Thus, we had to compromise. You could either have a standing MEB focused on rapidly using the deployment means available, and trained, exercised and ready to conduct MAGTF combat operations, or you could invent these HQs in a time of crisis."

⁴⁴ Marine Corps Gazette, "*Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Concept is Approved*", Marine Corps Gazette, Aug 1983, p6.

⁴⁵ The concept of permanent MAB and MAF headquarters was fought "tooth and nail" according to an e-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC(Ret), Nov 18, 1999. "Many were paranoid about the implications for the MEF, Div, and Wing. If we can fight in a MEB/Reg/Group configuration, maybe someone will decide we don't need three Divisions and Wings. Another group [in the Corps] just didn't like the Corps' investment in so many HQs — a valid concern." The concept evidently divided the Corps employment "community" into MEF or MEB proponents. Many believed the command elements were a waste of officer and senior enlisted talent; others believed the investment was crucial to effective, rapid deployment of MEB and MEF size forces.

⁴⁶ Marine Corps Gazette, "*Permanent MAGTFs Established*", Marine Corps Gazette, Jun 1985, p 5.

⁴⁷ E-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Gene A. Deegan, USMC(Ret), Nov 18, 1999.

⁴⁸ E-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Edmund P. Looney, USMC(Ret), Nov 14, 1999. "[The] concept of compositing was tested successfully during Exercise Bright Star [in the mid 1980s] when an east coast MEB [6th MEB] composited with a west coast MEF HQ; during the planning phase, the MEB was designated as the MEF Forward."

⁴⁹ Interview with Dr Jack Matthews, LtCol, USMC(Ret), MCU, Sep 1999.

⁵⁰ MCWP 0-1, "Componency", p 5. The Marine Corps, like the other services, were forced to provide more quality manpower to new joint and external commands after 1986. "The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 created a new model for joint operations by clearly placing responsibility for the accomplishment of a combatant command's assigned mission on the combatant commander....The act also established closer, more formal command linkages from the Services to the supported combatant commander, thereby creating the requirement for Service components to the combatant commands."

⁵¹ Doctrine is a key pillar of the DOTES (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Equipment, Support) system that the Marine Corps has used to build, change, and maintain force structure.

⁵² Schmid, Joseph H., Major, "Reorganizing the Fleet Marine Force: From Division-Wing Teams to Marine Expeditionary Brigades ", Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, 15 May 1989, p 3.

⁵³ ALMAR 23/88 of 3 Feb 1988. Effective 5 February, 1988, General Gray changed **Marine Air-Ground Task Force designations changed from MAU, MAR, and MAF back to the historical MEU, MEB, and MEF terminology.** This change was made to more accurately reflect the Marine Corps missions and capabilities of the time and to encourage an expeditionary attitude in the Marine Corps. It was a change back to the historical precedent.

⁵⁴ This argument for permanent MEB command elements continues to receive attention. Most recently in McDivitt, Matthew J., Captain, USMC, "MEB-Be We Should Reconsider", MCG July 1999, pp 42-44. "In order to realize the OMFTS concept, the Marine Corps must return to a force structure containing permanent brigade headquarters."

⁵⁵ Gray, A, General, 1989 MAGTF Master Plan, prologue. Though some of the permanent MEB headquarters would remain and carry out important roles, the MEBs were planned to be the lead element of a follow-on MEF. The MEF received primary importance as the primary warfighting MAGTF of the Corps under General Gray.

⁵⁶ For example, the 4th MEB demonstrated the flexibility and responsiveness of a forward deployed MEB by forming the core of the Special Purpose MAGTF (SPMAGTF) that conducted Operation Eastern Exit, the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991.

⁵⁷ The Marine Air-Ground Task Force Master Plan (Command Element Structure Annex, Figure C-1) for FY 91 reflects the earlier decision (FSPG 1988) to deactivate three of the permanent MEB command elements and embed them in the MEF CE. Following information applies:

Unit	Number	Manning Objective (Active)
MEF CE	3*	80-89%
MEB CE	3	90-93%
MEU CE	6	94-100%

*Each active MEF CE is capable of being separated into MEF nucleus and MEB CE.

⁵⁸ E-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Edmund P. Looney, USMC(Ret), Nov 14, 1999. "Both FSPGs were influenced by the then CMC who pushed the MEF concept. The goal was to put more gun-fighters in the FMF. . . ." 6th MEB was to be embedded in II MEF effective 1 July 1990.

⁵⁹ Mundy, C. E., General, USMC, "Planning the Marine Corps Force Structure", ltr to Bgen Charles C. Krulak, USMC, HQMC, Washington, D.C., 15 Aug 1991. "My intent is to structure a Marine Corps that is the most effective and economical force in readiness we can obtain against the backdrop of fiscal austerity and a rapidly changing world scene."

⁶⁰ MAGTF Presentation Team Pocket Guide, MCCDC, Quantico, VA, 1 Oct 1990. At least two of the permanent brigade headquarters were already scheduled to be deactivated before the FSPG convened in 1991. According to the MAGTF Presentation Team Pocket Guide, "5th MEB to be embedded in I MEF at a date to be determined. 6th MEB to be embedded in II MEF effective 1 July 1990."

⁶¹ Though there were some follow-on employment concerns with the adequacy of the MEB's command and control capabilities, MajGen Deegan makes the point that the value of a proficient, well-trained MEB headquarters is in its ability to deploy rapidly with substantial combat power. "The proof of the pudding was in Desert Storm. 7th MEB deployed as they had trained and were quickly followed by 1st MEB. I sat just to the left of General Powell for the daily updates in the Pentagon and the Marines looked good. With a lot more airlift, it took the Army approximately 60 days to equal the Marine combat power in theater. Although 7th MEB did not fight as a MEB, Saddam had the option [to attack] and 7th MEB was ready. The MEF arrived shortly thereafter and the MEBs disappeared, just as planned."

⁶² Demonstrating uncanny foresight of future Desert Storm problems, Maj Linn accurately predicted (in 1984) areas that needed to be dealt with in the composite MAGTF concept. "...unless additional augmentation is received, the composite MAGTF will lack the necessary command and control capability... Furthermore, it does not have an aviation command and control capability.... Successful compositing will require planning and practice." Linn, "The Composite MAGTF Concept", p 23, 24.

⁶³ HQMC, Force Structure Planning Group Final Report Binder, Washington, D.C., Oct 199, Command Element Methodology, Appendix B-1. "The lessons learned from Southwest Asia reflected the inadequacy of the MEF as a warfighting organization. The ability to function in a joint/combined arena as both a warfighter and component headquarters in a theater war had to be developed over time. Even then, there were considerable deficiencies in personnel and equipment in command and control, communications and intelligence."

⁶⁴ Telephone Interview with Lieutenant General Robert F. Milligan, 15 October, 1999.

⁶⁵ Williams, J.D., LtCol, Interview, 23 Sep 1999.

⁶⁶ FSPG Final Report, p B-1.

⁶⁷ MCWPO- 1.1, "Componency", p 6. "Operation Desert Storm revealed that manning and equipping a Marine Corps component headquarters out of the limited resources of the MAGTF was insufficient and that the roles and functions of such a component were not fully understood."

⁶⁸ Burchell, p12. "Validated under real-world pressure, MPF operations provided the first truly capable force in northern Saudi Arabia in September 1990. The goal to unload ships and marry equipment with arriving units was achieved within the expected 10 days. In fact, the first brigade (7th MEB) occupied its defensive positions within four days of its arrival."

⁶⁹ E-mail response to interview questions from MajGen Edmund P. Looney, USMC(Ret), Nov 14, 1999. "[The] concept of compositing was tested successfully during Exercise Bright Star [in the mid 1980s] when an East Coast MEB [6th MEB] composited with a West Coast MEF HQ; during the planning phase, the MEB was designated as the MEF Forward."

⁷⁰ FSPG Final Report, Command Element Methodology, p B- 1. "Significant in our proposal is the elimination of standing MEB Headquarters... We needed to streamline the process by building in an organic capability within each MEF the flexibility to deploy a MEF Forward organization that could assume the role of the traditional MEBs. The structure saved in the elimination of these MEB Headquarters allowed us to build in that capability within the MEF."

⁷¹ Williams, J.D., LtCol, Interview, 23 Sep 1999. These points were recollections that came out of a meeting at HQMC in the early 1990s where General C.C. Krulak was in attendance.

⁷² MCDP-3, *Expeditionary Operations*. HQMC, Washington, D.C., April 1998, p 74. With no specifically defined structure (a challenge when marketing capabilities to a theater CINC), a MEF(Fwd) would be created ad hoc, as needed, out of the MEF's forces to deploy forward in advance of the full MEF headquarters.

⁷³ Barlow, MCG, May 1964, p 30-31. "Let's reduce the wing and division headquarters staffs to the advantage of our most probable initial echelon of deployment: the integrated, air-ground MEU and MEB.... To present a force in readiness to our country in a time of national crisis, we must organize *now* for combat."

⁷⁴ Thompson, R.H., "Lessons Learned from ARMVAL", Jul 1982, p 36-44.

⁷⁵ Several authors have argued that the exact verbage of the 1947 NSA should not be used to stand in the way of change. I.E. if the original law was for the *type* of force manifest in the Division/Wing team, would it not be relevant to replace the "3 Divisions and 3 Wings" requirement with a "3 MEF" requirement instead. These 3 MEF's might have permanent brigade MAGTFs vice Division / Wing / FSSG subordinate commands and provide the nation with an improved force-in-readiness.

⁷⁶ Hoffman, Frank G., Major, USMC, "Strategic Concepts and Marine Corps Force Structure in the 21st Century", MCG December 1993, pp 7 1-75. "Since everyone is looking for more innovation and greater efficiency, we should look at a permanent restructuring into six MEBs, a size and capability most consistent with the enabling concept." The Commandant had adopted the enabling concept as a concise description to characterize the Corps' basic role in the national defense.

⁷⁷ Quinn, Maj John T., "The Future Fleet Landing Force", MCG, June 1996, p 24.


⁷⁸ For example, the CNA field staff rep at FMFLant conducted a study in April, 1988 on the impact of establishing a standing MEB within FMFLant. See Center for Naval Analyses, *Information about Re-establishing Standing MEBs*, CNA Memorandum for the Record, Alexandria, VA, 30 Aug, 1999.


⁷⁹ Brown, Will, Col, USMC, "Reengineering the MEB," MCG, July 1993, p 32.

⁸⁰ See King, Willis J. Jr, LtCol, USMC, "Tailoring Marine Aviation for the Task at Hand", Marine Corps Gazette, Oct 1988, p 21-24.

⁸¹ Junette, Timothy E., Capt, "Reorganizing Marine Corps Aviation", Marine Corps Gazette, Oct 1988, p 18.

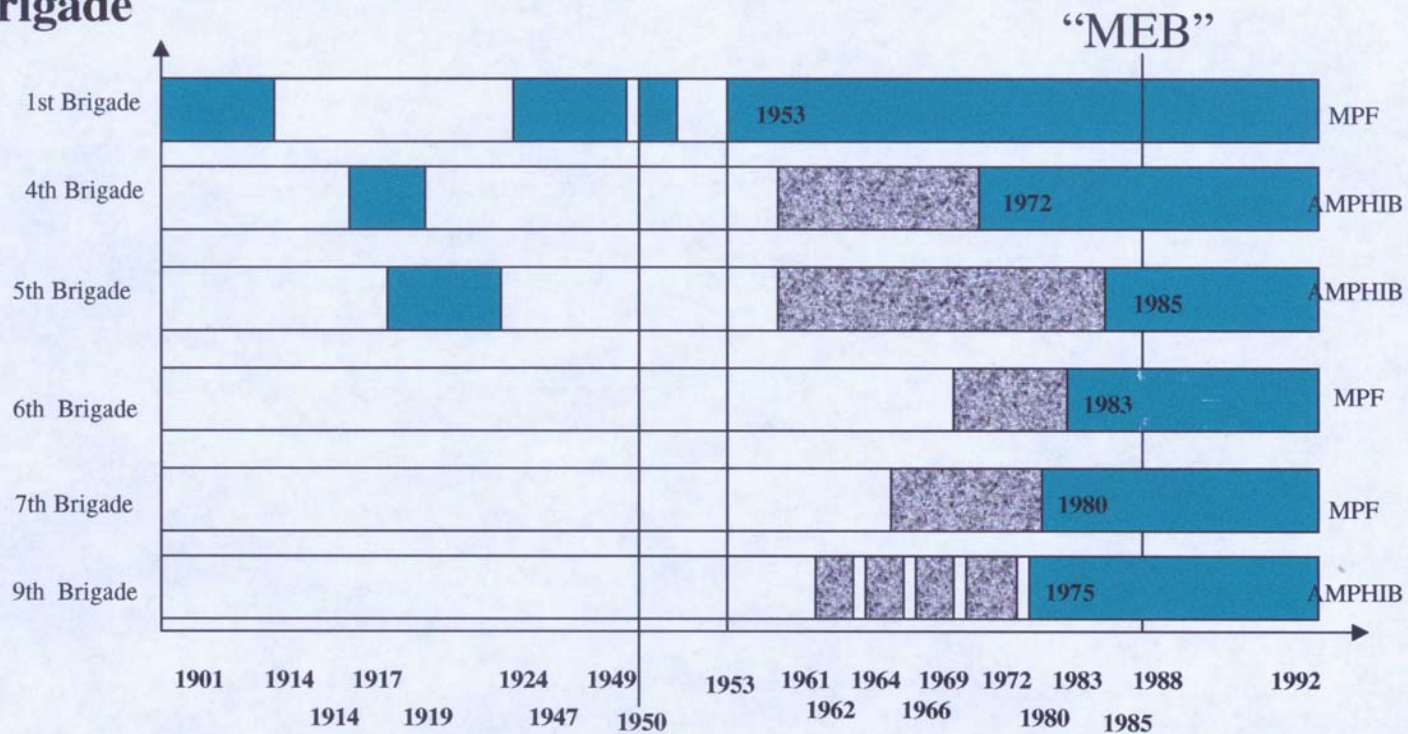
⁸² Junette, p 18. The greatest advantage of this and similar proposals, besides some personnel and monetary savings, is that these MAGs "would be ready to deploy at a moments notice instead of having to complete the complex, time-consuming transfer and integration of aircraft, personnel and material from different MAGs."

 Temporarily Activated
for Exercises and Operations

 Activated / Reactivated

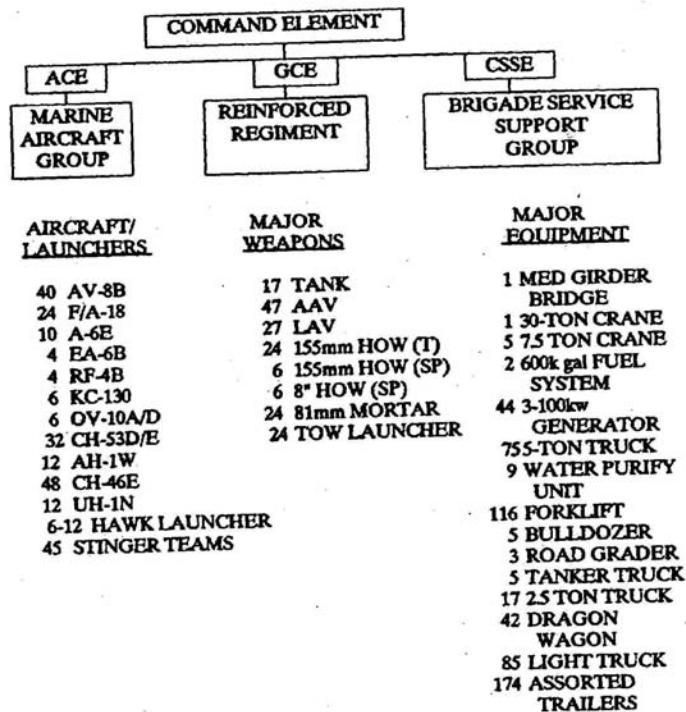
USMC Brigade Timeline

Brigade



Not to scale

Year



NOTES:

Task-organized to accomplish specific missions.
 Structure can vary from the organization shown.
 Approximate personnel: 14,800 USMC
 550 USN

Figure 2. Notional Amphibious MEB (1990)

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS MARITIME PREPOSITIONING FORCE (MPF)

SQUADRON PROFILE	MPSRON - 1	MPSRON - 2	MPSRON - 3
VESSEL NAME / COMPANY	PFC. OBREGON / Waterman* 2D LT. BOBO / AMSEA** SGT. KOCAL / Waterman MAJ. PLESS / Waterman	CPL. HAUGE / Maersk* PVT. PHILLIPS / Maersk** 1ST LT. BONNYMAN / Maersk PFC. BAUGH / Maersk PFC. ANDERSON / Maersk	1ST LT. LUMMUS / AMSEA* SGT. BUTTON / AMSEA** 1ST LT. LOPEZ / AMSEA PFC. WILLIAMS / AMSEA
LOCATION	Mediterranean Sea	Indian Ocean (Diego Garcia)	Pacific Ocean (Guam)
SPEED	17+ Knots	16.4 Knots	17.7 Knots
DRAFT	35 Feet	33 Feet	32 Feet
RANGE	11,107 Nautical Miles	10,802 Nautical Miles	11,107 Nautical Miles
SQUARE FEET	608,893 Sq. Feet	607,975 Sq. Feet	608,740 Sq. Feet
CONTAINERS	2,311 TEUs***	2,020 TEUs***	2,311 TEUs***
MOGAS (*/**)	361,074 Gallons	324,660 Gallons	409,920 Gallons
JP-5	4,974,942 Gallons	6,318,690 Gallons	6,140,400 Gallons
TOTAL BULK FUEL	5,336,016 Gallons	6,643,350 Gallons	6,550,320 Gallons
BULK WATER	374,808 Gallons	424,620 Gallons	395,976 Gallons
H ₂ O PRODUCTION	100,000 Gallons/Day	125,000 Gallons/Day	100,000 Gallons/Day
TIME TO PERSIAN GULF	11 Days	7 Days	16 Days
TIME TO KOREA	21 Days	13 Days	4 Days

* Flagship

** Alternate Flagship

*** Twenty Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs)

MARINE AIR/GROUND TASK FORCE (MAGTF) PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT*					
PERSONNEL		MAJOR EQUIPMENT		COMBAT AIRCRAFT	
Command Element (CE)	789	M1A1 Tanks	58	Fixed Wing	Rotary Wing
Ground Cmbt Element (GCE)	6,393	LAVs/ AAVs	25/109	F/A-18C/D 36	CH-46E 24
Aviation Cmbt Element (ACE)	7,276	155mm Towed Howitzers	30	AV-8B 20	CH-53D 8
Combat Service Spt (CSSE)	3,186	Armed HMMWVs (72 w/TOW)	129	EA-6B 5	CH-53E 16
		Hawk/ Stinger Launchers	8/45	KC-130 12	AH-1W 18
Total	17,644	ROWPUs	41	Total 73	UH-1N 9
		Trucks (5 Tons or larger)/MHE	489/121		Total 75

* Each Maritime Prepositioning Ship (MPS) squadron equipment set is "MIRROR IMAGED".

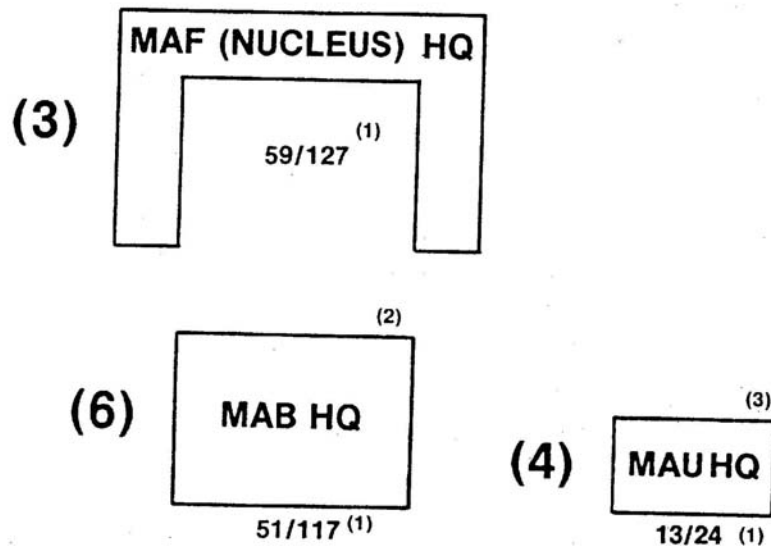
NAVAL SUPPORT ELEMENT (NSE) PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT					
PERSONNEL		LIGHTERAGE		MPS-1	MPS-2
Naval Cargo Handling and Port Group *	306	LARC-V (Amphibious Vehicle)		4	4
Naval Beach Group	763	SLWT (Side-Loading Warming Tug)		4	5
Naval Security Group	124	CSP (Causeway Section Powered)		16	15
Total	1,193	CSNP (Causeway Section Non-Powered)		30	25
		LCM-8 (Landing Craft)		8	10
					8

* Includes selected reserve force augmentation.

SUSTAINMENT		
Rations (Class I)	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin-right: 10px;">></div> <div style="text-align: center;">30 Days of Supply</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin-left: 10px;"><</div> </div>	Ammunition (Class V (A/W))
Individual Equipment (Class II)		Medical/Dental (Class VIII)
Bulk/Packaged POL (Class III)		Repair Parts (Class IX)
Construction Materials (Class IV)		

MPF TERMS
Fly-in Echelon (FIE) - includes personnel and additional equipment of the MAGTF/NSE according to the mission: planned at a total of 249 strategic airlift sorties per MPS set.
Flight Ferry (FF) - provides for the movement of self-deploying aircraft of the ACE, with aerial refueling support.
Survey Liaison Reconnaissance Party (SLRP) - includes approximately 80 knowledgeable personnel to make initial arrival and assembly recommendations, and provide commanders with information to assist in the final evaluation of the Arrival and Assembly Plan preparatory to MPF operations.

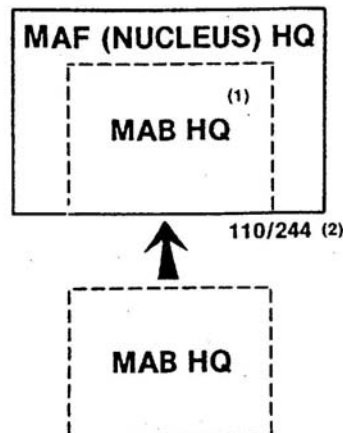
Figure3. Maritime Prepositioning Force Data (1999)



1. Personnel figures are USMC officer/enlisted and include H&S company totals. There are also 10/6 and 5/8 USN officer/enlisted in the MAF (nucleus) and MAB headquarters, respectively.
2. Two MAB headquarters are likely to be associated with each MAF (nucleus) headquarters.
3. Two MAU headquarters each will be assigned to I MAF and II MAF.

Figure 4. PERMANENT MAGTF HEADQUARTERS CONCEPT (1984)

OPERATIONAL MAF HEADQUARTERS



1. MAB headquarters is integrated with MAF (nucleus) headquarters to form an operational MAF headquarters.
2. Personnel figures include operational MAF H&S company totals.

Figure 4. FORMATION OF AN OPERATIONAL MAF HQ (1984)

Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Concept (1984)

Headquarters	Location	Designation
I MAF (Nucleus)	Camp Pendleton, CA	
5 th MAB	Camp Pendleton, CA	Amphibious
7 th MAB	Twentynine Palms, CA	MPF
II MAF (Nucleus)	Camp Lejeune, NC	
4 th MAB	With 2d Fleet, Norfolk, VA	Amphibious
6 th MAB	Camp Lejeune, NC	MPF
III MAF (Nucleus)	Okinawa, JA	
1 st MAB	Oahu, HI	MPF*
9 th MAB	Okinawa, JA	Amphibious

Staffing Concepts

	MAF Off/Enl	MAB Off/Enl
1982	47/45	65/85**
1983	58/56	53/87
1984	54/59	51/117
...
1999	115/129***	0/0

* The 1st MAB was designated as an MPF MAB, but it had no capability to train with mechanized assets.

** Not counting Navy contingent or supporting H&S Company personnel

*** T/O figures. Staffing Goal figures not available.

Figure 5. Permanent MAGTF Headquarters Data

Appendix 1

Marine Expeditionary Brigade Lineages



LINEAGE OF

1ST MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1901 - 1914

ACTIVATED 1 JANUARY 1901 AT CAVITE, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, AS THE 1ST BRIGADE

RELOCATED DURING OCTOBER 1906 TO MANILA, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

DEACTIVATED 15 APRIL 1914

1947 - 1949

REACTIVATED 1 JUNE 1947 ON GUAM AS THE 1ST MARINE BRIGADE

DEACTIVATED 10 MAY 1949

1950

REACTIVATED 7 JULY 1950 AT CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA, AS THE 1ST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE

DEPLOYED DURING JULY-AUGUST 1950 TO PUSAN, KOREA

PARTICIPATED IN THE KOREAN WAR, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1950, OPERATING FROM
PUSAN PERIMETER

DEACTIVATED 13 SEPTEMBER 1950

1953 - 1988

REACTIVATED 19 JANUARY 1953 AT KANEHOE BAY, TERRITORY OF HAWAII,
AS THE 1ST PROVISIONAL AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE

REDESIGNATED 1 MAY 1956 AS THE 1ST MARINE BRIGADE

PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES DURING THE 1970s AND 1980s

REDESIGNATED 30 AUGUST 1985 AS THE 1ST MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 1ST MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

6 JULY 1988

DATE


COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



LINEAGE OF

4TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1917 - 1919

ACTIVATED 24 OCTOBER 1917 AT BOURMONT, HAUTE-MARNE, FRANCE, AS THE 4TH BRIGADE OF MARINES,
2D DIVISION (ARMY)

PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGNS

 AISNE
 AISNE-MARNE
 ST. MIHIEL
 MEUSE-ARGONNE

PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I DEFENSIVE CAMPAIGNS

 TOULON-TROYON
 CHATEAU-THIERRY
 MARBACHE
 LIMEY

PARTICIPATED IN THE OCCUPATION OF THE GERMAN RHINELAND, DECEMBER 1918 - JULY 1919

RELOCATED DURING AUGUST 1919 TO QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

DEACTIVATED 13 AUGUST 1919

1961 - 1988

TEMPORARILY REACTIVATED AS THE 4TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE
AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE 1960s TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES
AND OPERATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND ATLANTIC AREAS

PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERVENTION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, APRIL-JUNE 1965

REACTIVATED 24 JULY 1972 AT LITTLE CREEK, VIRGINIA,
AS THE 4TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE

PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES DURING THE 1970s
AND INTO THE 1980s IN THE CARIBBEAN, MEDITERRANEAN,
ATLANTIC, AND NORTH ATLANTIC AREAS

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 4TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

6 JULY 1988
DATE

Bill Gray
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

file copy



LINEAGE OF

5TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1918 - 1924

ACTIVATED 4 SEPTEMBER 1918 AT QUANTICO, VIRGINIA, AS THE 5TH BRIGADE

DEPLOYED DURING SEPTEMBER 1918 TO BREST, FRANCE

RELOCATED DURING AUGUST 1919 TO HAMPTON ROADS, VIRGINIA

DEACTIVATED 13 AUGUST 1919

REACTIVATED 1 NOVEMBER 1921 AT SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, AS THE 5TH BRIGADE

DEACTIVATED 1 MARCH 1924

1961 - 1992

TEMPORARILY REACTIVATED AS THE 5TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE
AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE 1960S TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES
AND OPERATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND WEST COAST AREAS

ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1962

REDESIGNATED 18 AUGUST 1970 AS THE 5TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE

ACTIVATED FOR PARTICIPATION IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES DURING
THE 1970S AND 1980S

ACTIVATED 1 JULY 1985 AT CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA; AS
A PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 5TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

DEPLOYED DURING DECEMBER 1990 - FEBRUARY 1991 TO THE WESTERN PACIFIC,
GULF OF OMAN, NORTH ARABIAN SEA, AND THE PERSIAN GULF

PARTICIPATED IN OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM, JANUARY-MARCH 1991

PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION SEA ANGEL, BANGLADESH, MAY 1991

RETURNED DURING JUNE 1991 TO CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA



LINEAGE OF

6TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1970 - 1990

TEMPORARILY ACTIVATED AS THE 6TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE AT VARIOUS TIMES
DURING THE 1970s TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES IN
THE NORTH ATLANTIC AND EAST COAST AREAS

ACTIVATED 26 JULY 1983 AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA, AS A
PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS

PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS EXERCISES AND OPERATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN,
MEDITERRANEAN, NORTH ATLANTIC, AND ATLANTIC DURING THE 1980s

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 6TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

PARTICIPATED IN OPERATIONS IN PANAMA, DECEMBER 1989 - JANUARY 1990

22 JUNE 1990

DATE

Andrew Gray
COMMANDANT, THE MARINE CORPS

file copy (1988)



LINEAGE OF

7TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1962 - 1988

TEMPORARILY ACTIVATED AS THE 7TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE AT
VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE 1960s TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES
AND OPERATIONS IN THE PACIFIC AND WEST COAST AREAS

TEMPORARILY ACTIVATED AS THE 7TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE AT
VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE 1970s TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISES
AND OPERATIONS IN THE WEST COAST AREA

ACTIVATED AS A PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS 16 MAY 1980 AT
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA, AS THE
7TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE

PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES DURING THE 1980s

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 7TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

6 JULY 1988

DATE


COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

NAVMC 192 5100 10 50-17700

file copy

United States Marine Corps



LINEAGE OF

9TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

1962 - 1969

ACTIVATED 16 AUGUST 1962 AT CAMP HAUGE, OKINAWA, AS THE 9TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE
FOR EXERCISES ON OKINAWA'S EASTERN COAST

DEACTIVATED 21 OCTOBER 1962

REACTIVATED 5 AUGUST 1964 AT CAMP HAUGE, OKINAWA, IN SUPPORT OF
CONTINGENCY PLANS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

DEPLOYED DURING AUGUST-OCTOBER 1964 ABOARD AMPHIBIOUS SHIPPING IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

REDEPLOYED DURING MARCH 1965 TO DA NANG, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

DEACTIVATED 6 MAY 1965

REACTIVATED 1 MARCH 1966 AT CAMP COURTNEY, OKINAWA, AS THE 9TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE,
FLEET MARINE FORCE

DURING THE PERIOD MARCH 1966 - NOVEMBER 1969 PROVIDED SPECIAL LANDING FORCE
TASK GROUPS FOR NUMEROUS COMBAT OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

DEACTIVATED 7 NOVEMBER 1969

1972 - 1988

REACTIVATED 9 APRIL 1972 ON OKINAWA FOR CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

DEACTIVATED 9 FEBRUARY 1973

REACTIVATED 26 MARCH 1975 FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA EVACUATIONS

DEACTIVATED 11 MAY 1975 AND 9TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE STAFF NUCLEUS ACTIVATED

ACTIVATED FOR NUMEROUS OPERATIONS AND EXERCISES IN SOUTH KOREA, AUSTRALIA,
OKINAWA, AND THE PHILIPPINES DURING THE LATE 1970s AND INTO THE 1980s

REDESIGNATED 5 FEBRUARY 1988 AS THE 9TH MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE

6 JULY 1988

DATE

Amey
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Appendix 2

Marine Corps Fiscal Year End Strengths
1941-1947)

Marine Corps Fiscal Year End Strength, 1941-1997

<i>Year</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Enlisted</i>	<i>Total</i>
1941	3,339	51,020	54,539
1942	7,138	135,475	142,613
1943	21,384	287,139	308,523
1944	32,788	442,816	475,604
1945	37,067	437,613	474,680
1946	14,208	141,471	155,679
1947	7,506	85,547	93,053
1948	6,907	78,081	84,988
1949	7,250	78,715	85,965
1950	7,254	67,025	85,279
1951	15,150	177,770	192,920
1952	16,413	215,544	213,957
1953	18,731	230,488	249,219
1954	18,593	205,275	223,868
1955	18,417	186,753	205,170
1956	17,809	182,971	200,780
1957	17,434	183,427	200,861
1958	16,471	172,754	189,495
1959	16,065	159,506	175,571
1960	16,203	154,418	170,621
1961	16,132	160,777	176,909
1962	16,861	174,101	190,962
1963	16,737	172,946	189,693
1964	16,843	172,934	189,777
1965	17,258	172,955	190,213
1966	20,512	241,204	261,716
1967	23,592	261,677	285,269
1968	24,555	282,697	307,252
1969	25,698	284,073	309,771
1970	24,941	234,796	259,737
1971	21,765	190,604	212,369
1972	19,843	178,395	198,238
1973	19,282	176,816	196,098
1974	18,740	170,062	188,802
1975	18,591	177,360	195,951
1976	18,882	173,517	192,399
1977	18,650	173,057	191,707
1978	18,388	172,427	190,815
1979	18,229	167,021	185,250
1980	18,198	170,271	188,469
1981	18,363	172,257	190,620
1982	18,975	173,406	192,380
1983	19,983	174,106	194,089
1984	20,366	175,848	196,214
1985	20,175	177,850	198,025
1986	20,199	178,615	198,814
1987	20,047	179,478	199,525
1988	20,079	177,271	197,350
1989	20,099	176,857	196,956
1990	19,958	176,694	196,652
1991	19,753	174,287	194,040
1992	19,132	165,397	184,529
1993	18,430	159,949	178,379
1994	17,823	156,949	174,158
1995	17,831	156,808	174,639
1996	17,885	155,710	173,595
1997	17,733	153,904	171,637

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